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WOMAN'S PART IN THE 1934 COTTON ADJUSTMENT PROGRAM

A radio talk by Mrs. Ola Powell Malcolm, Extension Service, delivered in the Department of Agriculture period, National Farm and Home Hour, Wednesday, January 10, 1934, and broadcast by a network of 43 associate-NBC radio stations.

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DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Few could believe that in 1933 a million cotton farmers would go into their fields and plow up nearly one-third of the cotton already growing -- ten million acres, much of it matured, the bolls filled with white fluffy cotton -- but they did it -- and almost within 90 days.

Women throughout the Cotton Belt have manifested intelligent interest in the cotton adjustment program and have welcomed the opportunity to help in making it a success.

Women's efforts thus far have been to meet emergency conditions in a way that will bring results of permanent value. The part they have already played in the recovery of agriculture is of very great significance. Farm women everywhere have shown their faith in the future and have been commended for their courage, enterprise and hard work in actually bringing about improvements in living conditions in country homes in spite of hard times. As Carlyle said: "Our Grand Business is not to see what is Dimly in the Distance but To Do what is Clearly at Hand."

Developing our resources and making the best use of what we have at hand has been an improvement part of woman's work.

The real home-created enjoyment and protection brought to farm families who have pantries well stocked, smoke houses filled with fine quality meats, and homes and surroundings in good condition has actually put into each day's living a sort of satisfaction and happiness that money could not buy.

The morale of many thousands of farm families was strengthened through their adoption of the live-at-home program. Helping people to help themselves must be a part of every plan suggested to aid farmers, and if we can believe in the True Wealth about which Milton wrote, that will help too. Milton said: "There is Nothing that makes men Rich and Strong but that which they carry inside of them. Wealth is of the Heart, Not of the Hand."

We will not miss the purpose of the New Deal if farm families everywhere are really helped to live more abundantly.

Through the organization of Home Demonstration Clubs and Counsels, more than 900 regularly employed women extension agents in the Southern States are making contracts every month in each State with between 50 and 60 thousand farm women and girls who are as enrolled as demonstrators and cooperators. This army of trained women not only did their best in the 1933 emergency program, but they can be depended on to help in the 1934 cotton acreage adjustment program. Through their experience they have come to realize that "Their value lies not in what they themselves can do, but in what they can get other people to do."

This emergency work is furnishing an opportunity to use most effectively the home demonstration organization that has been developed and gives the woman agent a chance to get into farm homes she has heretofore not been able to reach.

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We believe any adjustment in farming that is so important to our rural area should be carefully explained to the farm women so that the women as well as the men may understand the need and the nature of these farm programs of controlled production. If this is not done we will not get the cooperation and the results which it is possible to obtain.

In no other business besides farming does the woman of the household have as much influence on the decisions that are made. She usually understands the practical side of the business. Many a farm woman is aware of her responsibility to be informed. An effort is being made to inform her intelligently so that she can counsel with her husband and neighbors and help them in making the right decisions. Secretary Wallace recently said: "It might be that the farm women of the United States can make or break this New Deal for Agriculture." Women who are earnestly and honestly becoming informed about the real cause for existing conditions can be of great help in spreading a better understanding of the cotton adjustment programs.

"No nation can be great without thrift." So then, acres retired from growing cotton will need to be used in growing better and more food for the farm family and feed for the livestock used for producing food for the family. Judging from the estimates, many States have made, more acres than those retired from cotton will be needed for growing food if Cotton Belt farm families produce, preserve and prepare on their farms an adequate variety and supply of foods.

A recent survey in one State where there are more than 200 thousand farms, many of these operated by tenants, showed that 40,000 of them are now without milk cows; 30,000 without poultry, and more than half without hogs. According to State figures between 25 & 30 acres of land are needed to supply the average farm family of 5 persons with food and to furnish pasture and feed for workstock, poultry, meat animals and the family corn.

This live-at-home demonstration calls for the production of fruits, vegetables, and other food crops, and for the following livestock: 2 meat hogs, a flock of 50 hens, 1 beef animal, 4 milk cows, and, if desired, a few sheep. Under average conditions such a program would call for the use of one-half acre in garden, one-half acre in orchard, 2 acres for such crops as sweet potatoes, melons, cane for syrup, and field peas, 6 acres for pasture in summer and small grain pasture in winter, 12 acres in grain crops, and 4 acres in hay and silage crops.

Such a system will produce all the food needed for a family of five and all the feed required for the poultry, meat animals and workstock. It will hold cash expense down to about \$100. That will be needed for buying cans and jars, sugar, coffee, some flour and spices, seed, medicines and incidentals.

Such an opportunity for securing the best quality of food is well worth while when we consider that if all food is bought it costs an average family of five about \$600 per year if every member is properly nourished. Where the farm garden is not big enough to supply the needs of the family I suggest a family scheme of cooperation where the farm woman is given the use of 4 acres of land -- the amount the survey shows is needed for the average family garden and orchard -- and that she be given the rental payment on 4 contracted acres and allowed to use it in buying good varieties of berries and small fruit trees, garden seed and so on. And that the man have the rest of the rental payments for buying seed, fertilizer, and equipment for the production of cotton, and for the production of feed for workstock, and feed for livestock for food for the family.



Such a division of the money received from the Government would help encourage the wives and husbands to plan jointly for an all year calendar garden -- a calendar orchard and in the raising of other food supplies for use in keeping the family well fed and in good health.

So to the women of the Cotton Belt, let me say that our part in the 1934 farm adjustment program is a threefold task.

First, we must acquaint ourselves with the facts that there is a real and urgent need for the 1934 program. That the supply of American cotton is too big, and that we must control production until the mills of the world have had time to use up some of our big supply and get it in line with a normal demand.

Second, it is woman's duty to induce the man to rent the Secretary some land near the house, where it is possible and practical to do so, and then to do everything in her power to get some of this land planted to small fruits and berries, and vegetables, and food and feed for home use -- and

Third, to counsel and cooperate with the men in working out these various farm problems. This is our opportunity to lay the foundation for better homes, better living, better children, and a better Southland.

